

# The Caledonian.

St. Johnsbury, Vt., Thursday, Jan. 20, 1897.  
A GIRL'S SACRIFICE.

The saying of the Psalmist, that "weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning," sometimes appears to be woefully reversed in the human experience. Out of the sunshine of a great joy, the subject of the parental chattering steps into the shadow of disappointment and loss. The fair skies are overcast, and the poor, fluttering heart trembles at the onrushing storm.

It was thus with Agatha Trenton. On the heels of a well-nigh bewildering happiness had come a crushing disaster.

Agatha was the daughter of a Brakeshire clergyman, and was the eldest of a somewhat numerous family. Her mother, for several years, had been a complete invalid, and on Agatha's shoulders rested the burden of household management. It was not a light one. The vicar of Hiltworth had no private means, and his income from tithes and endowment was not large. There was need for economy, and Agatha, with her usual good sense, was obliged to be frugal.

Agatha is a good girl—I only wish I were half as useful; but I shall never marry," said vivacious Mabel Sutton to a friend. "Agatha keeps too much in the background; no lover will venture to approach her."

It was an erring prophecy. In less than a fortnight from the evening of its utterance, the friend who had so gravely listened to it, had paid the debt she owed to fate.

Roderick Dalling was a good match. He was proprietor of the mill which had just opened at the north end of Hiltworth, an which was destined to revolutionize the hitherto quiet midland town. He had a handsome presence, an irreproachable character, the assurance of a moderate fortune, and a fine opinion of himself.

"My love is the growth of yesterday," he pleaded; "it has been developing day by day for months; it grows stronger with every word I hear you speak."

"I will call to mind," said Agatha, "that I have never loved you."

The maiden was rosy with surprise, and trembled at the vehemence of the young man's avowal. But already her face was crimsoned with the blush of a confession.

"I cannot deny that I do—care a little," she stammered; "but, indeed, I cannot promise to marry you."

"I must have time to think. There are difficulties."

Agatha was listening, as she spoke, to the echoes of noisy voices in the nursery, and before her mind could rise the picture of the pale, suffering mother in the adjoining room. If she consented to forsake her home, the vicar would have to engage a housekeeper.

"I understand it all," Roderick replied, gently. "Nevertheless, I believe even your father—who must of necessity lose if I gain—will advise you to say 'no' to me."

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The outlook for Agatha was entirely changed. When the last sad offices for the dear dead had been fulfilled, it was necessary to look the future fairly in the face; and this forecast was far from agreeable.

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Yet the girl knew that, though silent, he was simply waiting for the right moment to speak. She knew that he would not later be invited to give her the order she desired. Alone, in the solitude of her chamber, not seldom seen on her knees she groped her way to a decision, and, at length, she held it fast. She would give Roderick up. She had no right to ask any young man to wait indefinitely, and to the struggle she had entered she saw no time to retreat.

It was impossible that she should impose her burden upon Roderick, even if he were enamoured enough to invite it. She must fight her own battle with her own brain and fingers. The young manufacturer was expecting his brother from the North shortly. The two would then settle down together, and Agatha could find a wife and a housemistress.

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It was impossible that she should impose her burden upon Roderick, even if he were enamoured enough to invite it. She must fight her own battle with her own brain and fingers. The young manufacturer was expecting his brother from the North shortly. The two would then settle down together, and Agatha could find a wife and a housemistress.

Agatha thought, with a pang—Mabel Sutton.

A whole month went by, and then Agatha, dearest," he said, "can you not give me the promise for which I am waiting? I hope this is not too hasty an appeal, but I hear that Dr. Royal is about to leave from Brighton villa, and—and, if you give me permission, I will take the house; it is a commodious one."

It was the largest and best in Hiltworth, and the suggestion showed very clearly that Roderick Dalling desired to surround his wife with every comfort, and even luxury. But Agatha was firm. Duty demanded the sacrifice of sweet young hopes, and though now and again her heart died within her at the thought of the lonely life that might lie ahead, the imperative claim should be obeyed—leave me, look for some one else. Probably I shall never marry. There are other girls."

"To me there is but one in the wide world," he answered hoarsely. "Still, I will not annoy you; I will wait. Good day, Agatha."

been graciously allowed to have his say, it is perhaps worth while, as a mild amusement, to hear how he puts the case. In the first place, he says that an author's intent in his work is necessarily careless about his handwriting. He cannot break the flow of his thoughts to dot his "i's" and cross his "t's." Each author has a peculiar handwriting. The proof-reader takes the manuscript and tries to catch the purport of the author's thought. He has scarcely done so, when in comes another mass of proof-manuscript, an entirely different character, and a new thread has to be picked up until another interruption. This is not for a moment, but all night all the week, all the year, and the proof-reader is a half blind, half brain weary, and work pushing him incessantly, a letter may be left out or a comma inserted in the wrong place when slum-bang, he is away at the author's desk. He has seen an author scold a proof-reader for some trifling oversight when that same day the proof-reader had corrected an historical blunder which would have cost the author dearly had it seen the light. He has seen an author brag of his penmanship, and when his manuscript has been sent to him because it was unreadable, he himself was scarcely able himself to read it. He has seen an author scold a proof-reader for some trifling oversight when that same day the proof-reader had corrected an historical blunder which would have cost the author dearly had it seen the light. He has seen an author brag of his penmanship, and when his manuscript has been sent to him because it was unreadable, he himself was scarcely able himself to read it. He has seen an author scold a proof-reader for some trifling oversight when that same day the proof-reader had corrected an historical blunder which would have cost the author dearly had it seen the light. He has seen an author brag of his penmanship, and when his manuscript has been sent to him because it was unreadable, he himself was scarcely able himself to read it.

When I was a boy," said the Judge this morning, as he blew a long and portentous blast on an enormous bandana, which he fished out from under the blue swallow-tails—"when I was a boy the woods in Vermont were full of catamounts and the old man yet. At that time the woods were full of catamounts or loup-cervier—"loo see," the hunters called them—and the farmers had great to do to keep the sheep and killing their cattle. I loup-cervier is pretty nearly as big as a mastiff, as fierce as a tiger and as strong as a lion, and is altogether more dangerous than either of them. I have seen an old man, a fellow of prodigious strength and such great courage, who had been a soldier, and who knew the sensation of fear. My father had not lost much by the loup-cervier, because he had kept his stock securely closed in a strong shed, which none of the prowling beasts could succeed in breaking into. The house stood on the edge of the clearing, and back of it for miles and miles there was nothing but the mountains and the woods. One night the family all went to bed except Shepherd, who sat up with the big pine fire shelling corn with a jack-knife stuck in a log of wood. All of a sudden he heard a noise from the catamounts, and a heavy breathing of the gaunt old wolf was no longer audible at the family door. Moreover, Mrs. Trenton was distinctly uneasy, and her head ached.

The change to Melbury had accomplished what medicine could only feebly attempt. The boys were with their studies, and the three young ladies in the vicinity; that day becoming more hopeful. The horizon was decidedly brighter than at any date since the death of the reverend father, and the good fortune—far from being a mere accident—had not yet reached its climax.

Strange